

Wright fights to protect thrifts as government begins cleanup

DALLAS (AP) — House Speaker Jim Wright vowed to continue policing regulators and protecting Texas thrifts as the government embarked on a massive cleanup of the state's struggling savings and loan industry. Wright said regulators must be monitored as they embark on a three-year savings and loan cleanup. But he said he is willing to give new Federal Home Loan Bank Board Chairman M. Danny Wall "the benefit of the doubt" as he works to stabilize the embattled FHLB system. Wright's remarks come on the eve of a long-awaited thrift industry cleanup. Under the "Southwest Plan" that will be considered Tuesday in Washington by the FHLB

board, regulators would enact a series of thrift mergers, acquisitions and closings. But a "megathrift" cleanup approach is the wrong solution for Texas and the nation, the Democratic leader from Fort Worth said. "We should not cultivate a future where there is nothing but fewer and fewer financial institutions that are more and more remote from the people who depend on them," Wright told the *Dallas Times Herald* in an interview published Sunday. "When the decision-making process on loans is remote and inaccessible, it creates a sense of despair and impotence among borrowers," he said.

And Wright said regulators had better reverse a budding trend if they expect him to support requests for additional thrift cleanup funds. Experts claim about \$50 billion in funds will be needed to complete an industry cleanup — far more than the \$10.8 billion regulators already have gained. Critics say Wright shouldn't have intervened in the closing of Addison-based Vernon Savings and Loan. Wright asked regulators to delay the thrift's closing so it could explore a Wall Street deal to take most of its bad loans off the books. The deal fell through and the FHLB Board declared Vernon insolvent a few months later, at a cost to

the thrift insurance fund of \$1.3 billion. "I'm not ashamed of what I have done," Wright said. "It's a natural instinct to want to salvage something rather than see it torn down and destroyed, to protect citizens from the unreasonable exercise of power by appointed agents of the government." Wright also said attacks by the media and the opposition are frustrating but will not stop him from continuing to fight. "I'm not ready to give up being quarterback," he said. "I've got to keep my mind on throwing the next pass — I can't stop to cry foul on the last play."

Memorial to recognize Janis Joplin

PORT ARTHUR (AP) — Had she not died 17 years ago, Janis Joplin would have been 45 years old tomorrow. Her birthday has been chosen as the day her hometown will come to terms with its famous child of the '60s. More than 17 years after her death at age 27, the life and achievements of the legendary rock and roll and blues singer will be showcased and recognized in Port Arthur with the dedication of the Janis Joplin Memorial. Sponsored by the Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce and the Port Arthur Historical Society, the dedication will feature a concert and the unveiling of the Southeast Texas Musical Heritage Exhibit, featuring an original, bronze, multi-image sculpture of Joplin by Douglas Clark.

Until enough money is raised to either build or buy a permanent building for the singer's memorial display, the memorial will be housed at the Gates Memorial Library on the Lamar University at Port Arthur campus. On display and on permanent loan from her family are Joplin's Bible; two signed high school yearbooks; one of her gold records; jewelry; and a 5-foot-tall wooden Christmas decoration she painted at age 10. Also on display are framed copies of newspaper and magazine articles about her and the record jackets and records of the albums "Janis," "Janis Joplin-Farewell Song," "Pearl," "Janis Joplin's Greatest Hits" and "Joplin in Concert"; and original photographs of her.

Inspection records indicate many Dallas bridges unsafe

DALLAS (AP) — Inspectors have found that a majority of bridges in Dallas County are in various states of disrepair and do not meet Texas safety standards. Nine of 150 bridges in the county are beyond repair and should be replaced and two of those could collapse at any time, according to state inspection records.

Records showed that only 10 of the 150 bridges studied met safety standards. A car carrying a woman and her two children skidded off a Lake Ray Hubbard causeway last week. Substandard guardrails, such as those along the Rowlett road where 26-year-old Betty Stenline and her daughters Tawana, 6, and Crystal, 5, plunged into the lake are more com-

mon than structural instability, according to inspection reports. City and county officials said they were not aware of many of the bridge problems because state inspection records are not generally sent to them until the bridges have been inspected by private engineering consultants. A survey conducted in 1986 showed that 45 of the county's 627 bridges were not sturdy enough to carry normal loads and should be limited to light load traffic. Sixteen bridges were recommended closed in 1986. Of the 150 bridges studied and each 1987-88 inspection reviewed, 41 had structural problems.

Other problems noted in the reports included substandard guardrails and flooding problems. Some 128 bridges have guardrails that do not meet state standards and 68 are blocked by debris and silt which could cause flooding, according to the records. Cliff Keheley, Dallas director of public works, said substandard guardrails and blocked waterways are considered serious problems. Those kinds of problems receive quicker attention than structural problems do. "Anything wrong with basic safety equipment like the railings is an immediate problem that should be remedied," he said.

Expert says federal officials must fight 'terrorism at home'

DALLAS (AP) — An attack on domestic terrorism that preys on the poor should be waged by federal officials, the chairman of the Federal National Mortgage Association told conventioners at a home builders' trade show.

"We've gone through this era of worshipping greed and personal aggrandizement, and I think there is some receptivity in the country to renew the commitment of the country to compassion for people who are in really bad straits," David Maxwell said Saturday.

Maxwell called life in poor neighborhoods "terrorism at home" and said the government can't ignore it. "A new policy must help to build and sustain safe communities where housing is a means to an end, not a dead end," he said. Maxwell also addressed problems facing first-time home buyers, saying the typical buyer is a couple with two incomes that still finds housing out of reach. Family incomes remained flat between 1973 and 1984, when inflation is taken into account, he said.

The median-priced home now absorbs nearly twice as much family income as it did in 1973," Maxwell said. Maxwell, who is vice chairman of the National Housing Task Force, said during this election year candidates should be reminded that housing is a vital part of the economy. The task force will make recommendations for new housing legislation in March. The report will be highly influential but chances for housing legislation this year are slim because of the November election, Maxwell said.

Texas college ordered to improve its finances

DALLAS (AP) — Officials with a Henderson County home for disadvantaged children said a plan to transfer the home's funds and assets to financially troubled Bishop College isn't correct, a newspaper reported. Bishop College was given until March 31 by the U.S. Department of Education to improve its finances in order to qualify for \$400,000 in federal aid.

One of the conditions the education department placed on the col-

lege was to transfer about \$4 million in funds and assets from St. Paul Industrial and Training School, a Henderson County home that was ordered closed by a state district judge in 1984.

But St. Paul board member Joe Thomas of Malakoff said reports that the assets will be transferred are probably not correct, the *Athens Review* said in its Sunday edition.

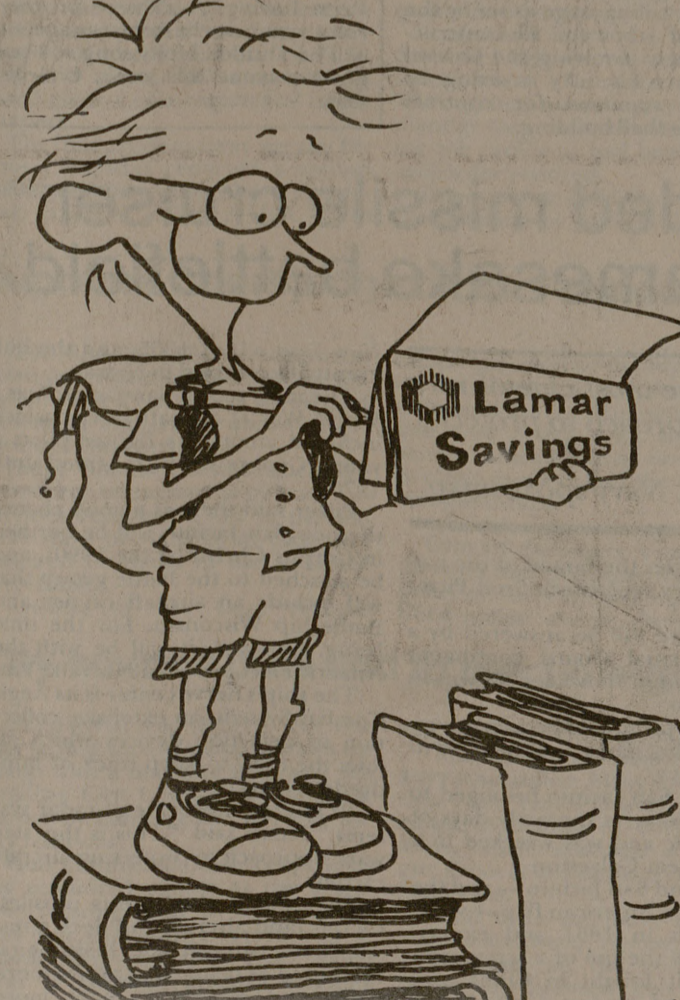
Close family members of Alice Smothers, operator of St. Paul with her late husband J.W. Smothers for

more than 50 years, said they were shocked at the news.

"I haven't heard anything about it and I'm surprised," said Ben Smothers, who is Alice Smothers' daughter-in-law.

Neither of her sons, Clay Smothers of Dallas, also a board member, or Ben Smothers, could be reached for comment.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, St. Paul was home to hundreds of black children who attended school and tended crops.



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